RLMI Results – June 2025

Key Findings

1. Regional and remote areas continue to be more likely to experience relatively weaker labour market conditions than their major city counterparts.
2. With that said, the June 2025 Regional Labour Market Indicator (RLMI) results highlight some current areas of considerable labour market strength in parts of regional Australia, including in regional Queensland and southern regional New South Wales.
3. All six remote regions covered in the JSA RLMI continue to be rated as either 'below average' or 'poor', reflecting more pronounced labour market challenges experienced in remote areas.

> ### Update to methodology: Inclusion of ABS Modelled Estimates
>
> In June 2025, the ABS modelled estimates of employment rates (working age) were incorporated into the RLMI model, replacing the ABS direct survey unemployment rate estimates that were previously used. The modelled estimates are more stable and reliable than the direct survey estimates.[1]

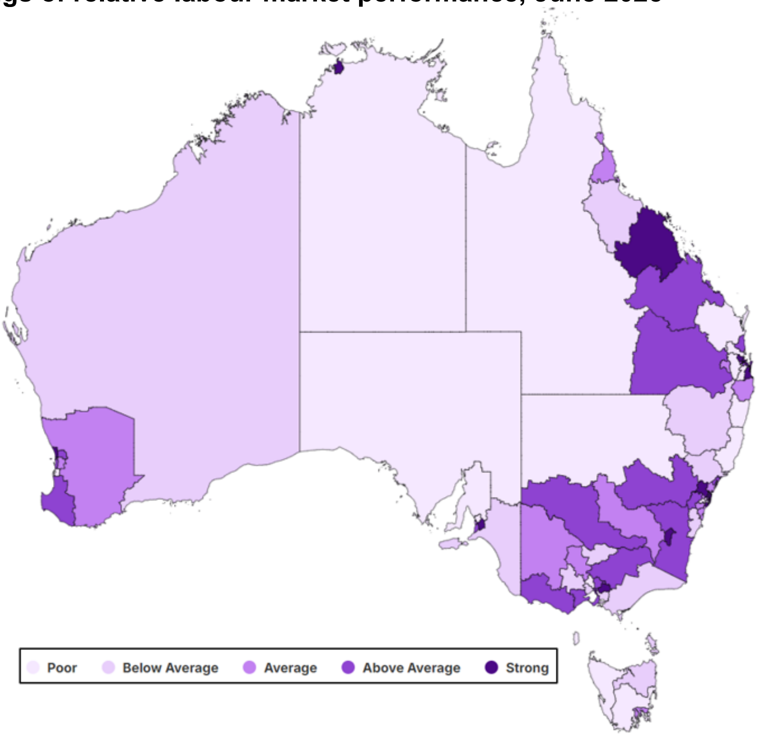
Labour market challenges are more pronounced in many regional areas

The June 2025 RLMI results continue to show that regional and remote areas are more likely to experience weaker labour market conditions than their major city counterparts, highlighting the additional challenges faced in many regional areas by both employers and jobseekers (see Chart 1, below).

- Around half of the SA4's (13 out of 28) located in regional areas were rated either 'below average' or 'poor' in June 2025, while all six (or 100%) remote areas were rated either 'below average' or 'poor'.
- Almost two-thirds of the SA4's (28 out of 44) located in major city areas were rated either 'strong' or 'above average' in June 2025.

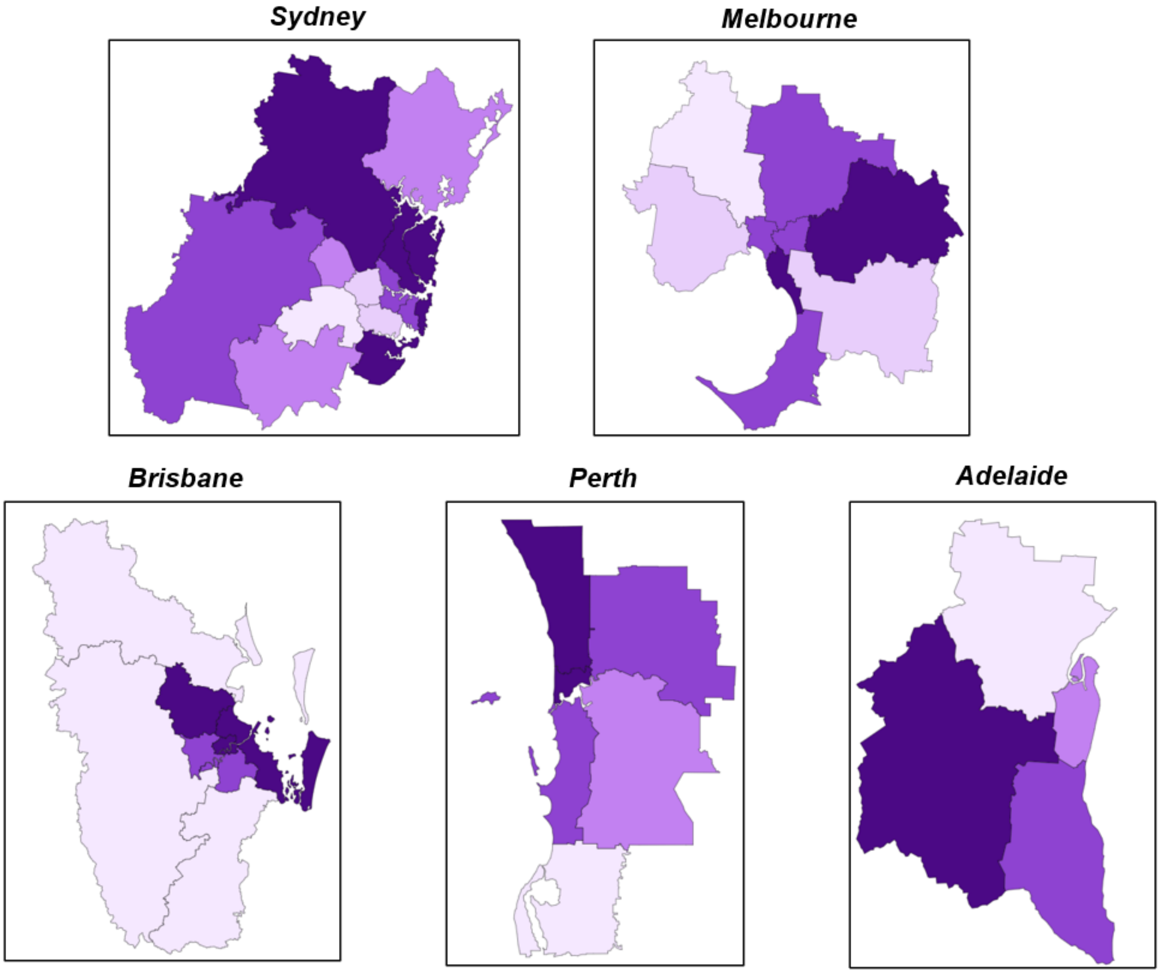
[1] Further information regarding the ABS modelled regional labour market statistics can be found from the ABS.

Chart 1: RLMI ratings of relative labour market performance, June 2025



Source: JSA, *Regional Labour Market Indicator (RLMI)*, June 2025

Chart 2: RLMI ratings of relative labour market performance, by selected Capital Cities, June 2025



Source: JSA, *Regional Labour Market Indicator (RLMI)*, June 2025

Recent trends in regional labour market performance

Although labour market challenges are typically more pronounced in many regional and remote areas, the latest RLMI results help to highlight some current areas of considerable labour market strength in parts of regional Australia.

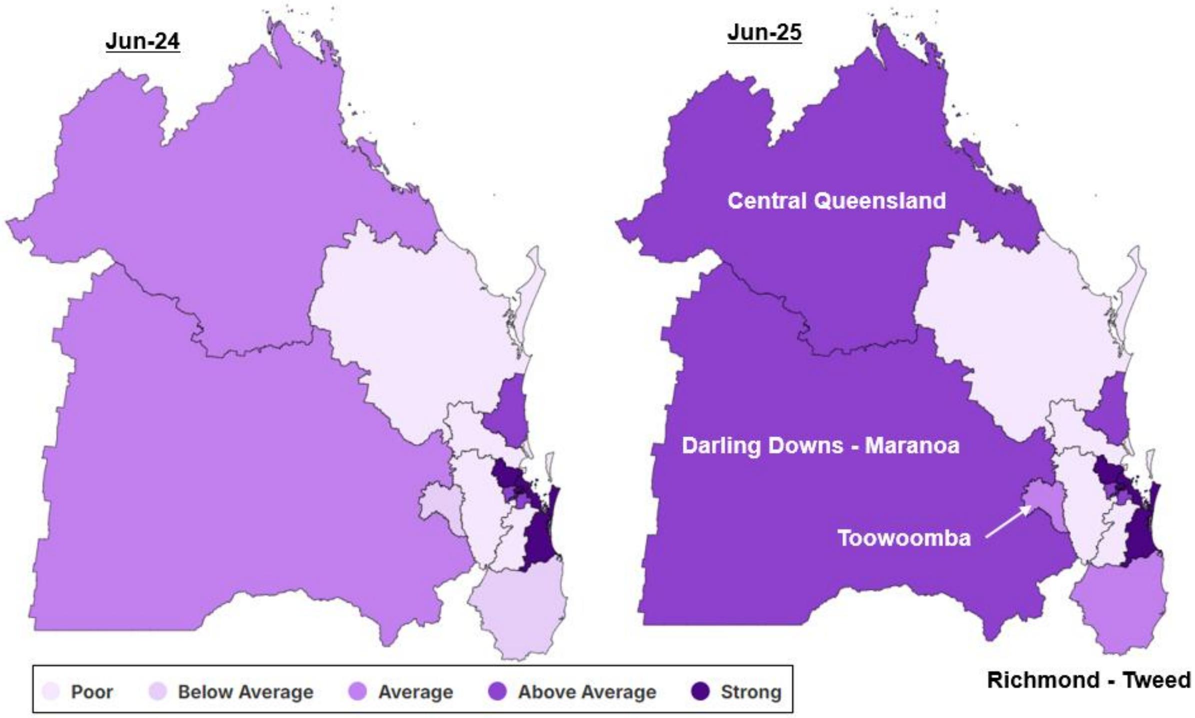
Spotlight: Regional areas surrounding Greater Brisbane[2]

One example of strong labour market conditions in regional Australia is in the cluster of regional areas that surround Greater Brisbane. The regional areas surrounding Greater Brisbane cover a vast area and make a substantial contribution to the social and economic wellbeing of Australia through key sectors such as agriculture, mining, construction, manufacturing, health care and transport.

The latest RLMI results show that labour market conditions have improved in the region over the last year.

- For instance, labour market conditions in the Central Queensland and Darling Downs – Maranoa SA4 regions were rated 'above average' in June 2025, up from their rating of 'average' a year ago (see Chart 3, below).
- Furthermore, labour market conditions were rated 'average' in Toowoomba and the Richmond – Tweed SA4 regions in June 2025, improving from their rating of 'below average' 12-months prior.

Chart 3: RLMI ratings of relative labour market performance for the regional areas surrounding Greater Brisbane



Source: JSA, *Regional Labour Market Indicator (RLMI)*, June 2025

Contributing to improved labour market conditions in the regional areas surrounding Greater Brisbane is a number of key labour market indicators which have strengthened over the last year.

[2] Includes the SA4 regions of Central Queensland, Darling Downs – Maranoa, Toowoomba and Richmond – Tweed (New South Wales)

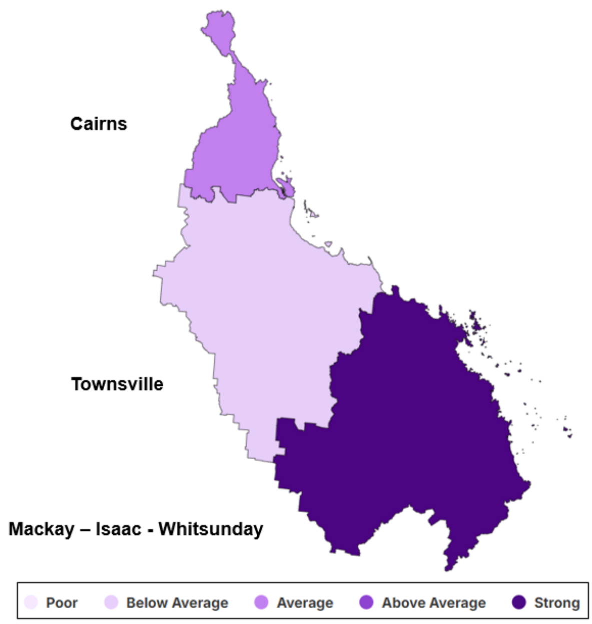
Table 1: Key labour market indicators for the regional areas surrounding Greater Brisbane

	Jun-24	Jun-25	Change
Employment Rate (15-64 years) (%)	77.4	78.1	Improved
Prop. on JobSeeker Income Support (%)	7.1	7.5	Softened
Unemployment Rate (%)	3.8	3.8	Stable
Vacancy Fill Rate (%)	61.4	67.4	Improved
Underemployment Rate (%)	6.9	6.3	Improved

In focus: Northern Queensland[3]

Northern Queensland enjoys a stunning natural environment of reef, rainforest and outback which provides an attractive lifestyle for its residents. The region also contributes significantly towards the Australian economy through key industries such as manufacturing, construction, mining and defence. The latest RLMI results show, however, that labour market conditions vary significantly within Northern Queensland, highlighting the importance of granular, region-specific data that identifies areas of relative strength and weakness.

Chart 4: RLMI ratings of relative labour market performance, June 2025



Source: JSA, Regional Labour Market Indicator (RLMI), June 2025

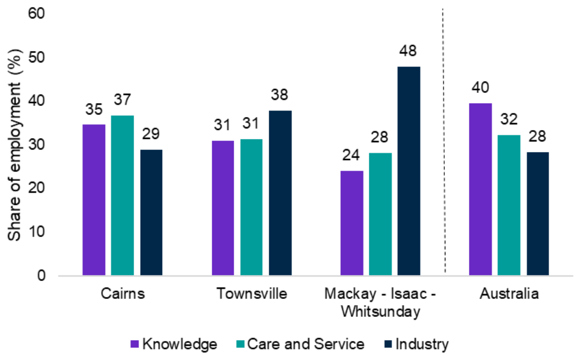
For instance, labour market conditions in Cairns and Townsville were rated ‘average’ and ‘below average’, respectively, in June 2025, highlighting the additional challenges faced by employers and jobseekers in these regions.

By contrast, Mackay – Isaac – Whitsunday was rated ‘strong’ in June 2025, indicating that labour market conditions are reasonably tight when compared to the national average.

Although Cairns, Townsville and the Mackay – Isaac – Whitsunday SA4 regions might be considered as part of the broader the Northern Queensland region, the workforce needs vary significantly between regions.

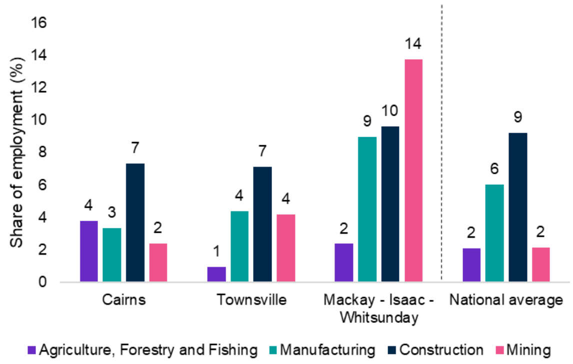
[3] Includes the SA4 regions of Cairns, Townsville and Mackay – Isaac – Whitsunday

Chart 5: Employment by type of occupation[4], May 2025



Source: ABS, 2025

Chart 6: Employment by type of Industry, May 2025



Source: ABS, 2025

For instance, industry jobs accounted for almost half (48%) of total employment in the Mackay – Isaac – Whitsunday SA4 in May 2025, well above the rate recorded for Cairns (29%) and Townsville (38%) (see Chart 5, above).

- Mining is the largest employing industry in the Mackay – Isaac – Whitsunday SA4, accounting for 14% of total employment in May 2025 (see Chart 6, above).

The importance of key industries, most notably mining, in the Mackay – Isaac – Whitsunday SA4 region has enabled more employment opportunities for its residents, as well as residents from other regions ('fly-in-fly-out' or 'drive-in-drive out' workers).

- 97% of **residents** in the Mackay – Isaac – Whitsunday SA4 region **work in the region**.
- 12% of the **workforce** in the Mackay – Isaac – Whitsunday SA4 **region live in another region** ('fly-in-fly-out' or 'drive-in-drive-out' workers).

Table 2: 'Fly-in-fly-out' or 'drive-in-drive-out' workforce, 2021

	Cairns	Townsville	Mackay - Isaac - Whitsunday	Regional Australia
Prop. of the local workforce that live in another region ('fly-in-fly-out' or 'drive-in-drive-out' workers) (%)	3%	2%	12%	9%

Source: ABS Census, 2021.

[4] Knowledge workers include managers and professionals. Industry workers include machinery operators & drivers, technicians & trades workers and labourers. Care and service workers include community & personal service workers, clerical & administrative workers and sales workers.

Labour Market Rating by SA4, June 2025

Statistical Area Level 4 (SA4)	Remoteness	Jun-24	Jun-25	Direction
Central Coast	Major City	Average	Average	Stable
Sydney - Baulkham Hills and Hawkesbury	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable
Sydney - Blacktown	Major City	Average	Average	Stable
Sydney - City and Inner South	Major City	Above average	Above average	Stable
Sydney - Eastern Suburbs	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable
Sydney - Inner South West	Major City	Below average	Below average	Stable
Sydney - Inner West	Major City	Strong	Above average	Declined
Sydney - North Sydney and Hornsby	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable
Sydney - Northern Beaches	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable
Sydney - Outer South West	Major City	Average	Average	Stable
Sydney - Outer West and Blue Mountains	Major City	Above average	Above average	Stable
Sydney - Parramatta	Major City	Below average	Below average	Stable
Sydney - Ryde	Major City	Strong	Above average	Declined
Sydney - South West	Major City	Poor	Poor	Stable
Sydney - Sutherland	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable
Capital Region	Regional	Above average	Above average	Stable
New South Wales - Central West	Regional	Above average	Above average	Stable
Coffs Harbour - Grafton	Regional	Poor	Poor	Stable
Far West and Orana	Remote	Poor	Poor	Stable
Hunter Valley exc Newcastle	Regional	Below average	Below average	Stable
Illawarra	Cities of Regional Australia	Average	Average	Stable
Mid North Coast	Regional	Poor	Poor	Stable
Murray	Regional	Above average	Above average	Stable
New England and North West	Regional	Below average	Below average	Stable
Newcastle and Lake Macquarie	Cities of Regional Australia	Above average	Above average	Stable
Richmond - Tweed	Regional	Below average	Average	Improved
Riverina	Regional	Average	Average	Stable
Southern Highlands and Shoalhaven	Regional	Below average	Below average	Stable
Melbourne - Inner	Major City	Above average	Above average	Stable
Melbourne - Inner East	Major City	Above average	Above average	Stable
Melbourne - Inner South	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable
Melbourne - North East	Major City	Above average	Above average	Stable
Melbourne - North West	Major City	Poor	Poor	Stable
Melbourne - Outer East	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable
Melbourne - South East	Major City	Below average	Below average	Stable
Melbourne - West	Major City	Below average	Below average	Stable
Mornington Peninsula	Major City	Above average	Above average	Stable
Ballarat	Regional	Below average	Below average	Stable
Bendigo	Regional	Average	Average	Stable
Geelong	Cities of Regional Australia	Above average	Above average	Stable
Hume	Regional	Above average	Above average	Stable
Latrobe - Gippsland	Regional	Below average	Below average	Stable
Victoria - North West	Regional	Average	Average	Stable
Shepparton	Regional	Average	Below average	Declined
Warrnambool and South West	Regional	Above average	Above average	Stable

Statistical Area Level 4 (SA4)	Remoteness	Jun-24	Jun-25	Direction
Brisbane - East	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable
Brisbane - North	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable
Brisbane - South	Major City	Above average	Above average	Stable
Brisbane - West	Major City	Above average	Above average	Stable
Brisbane Inner City	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable
Ipswich	Major City	Poor	Poor	Stable
Logan - Beaudesert	Major City	Poor	Poor	Stable
Moreton Bay - North	Major City	Poor	Poor	Stable
Moreton Bay - South	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable
Cairns	Cities of Regional Australia	Average	Average	Stable
Darling Downs - Maranoa	Regional	Average	Above average	Improved
Central Queensland	Regional	Average	Above average	Improved
Gold Coast	Cities of Regional Australia	Strong	Strong	Stable
Mackay - Isaac - Whitsunday	Regional	Strong	Strong	Stable
Queensland - Outback	Remote	Poor	Poor	Stable
Sunshine Coast	Cities of Regional Australia	Above average	Above average	Stable
Toowoomba	Regional	Below average	Average	Improved
Townsville	Cities of Regional Australia	Below average	Below average	Stable
Wide Bay	Regional	Poor	Poor	Stable
Adelaide - Central and Hills	Major City	Above average	Strong	Improved
Adelaide - North	Major City	Poor	Poor	Stable
Adelaide - South	Major City	Average	Above average	Improved
Adelaide - West	Major City	Average	Average	Stable
Barossa - Yorke - Mid North	Regional	Poor	Poor	Stable
South Australia - Outback	Remote	Poor	Poor	Stable
South Australia - South East	Regional	Below average	Below average	Stable
Mandurah	Major City	Poor	Poor	Stable
Perth - Inner	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable
Perth - North East	Major City	Above average	Above average	Stable
Perth - North West	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable
Perth - South East	Major City	Average	Average	Stable
Perth - South West	Major City	Above average	Above average	Stable
Bunbury	Regional	Above average	Above average	Stable
Western Australia - Outback	Remote	Below average	Below average	Stable
Western Australia - Wheat Belt	Regional	Average	Average	Stable
Hobart	Cities of Regional Australia	Average	Average	Stable
Launceston and North East	Regional	Below average	Below average	Stable
Tasmania - South East	Regional	Poor	Poor	Stable
Tasmania - West and North West	Remote	Poor	Poor	Stable
Darwin	Cities of Regional Australia	Strong	Strong	Stable
Northern Territory - Outback	Remote	Poor	Poor	Stable
Australian Capital Territory	Major City	Strong	Strong	Stable

Source: JSA, Regional Labour Market Indicator (RLMI), June 2025

RLMI Explanatory Notes

Overview

The Regional Labour Market Indicator (RLMI) combines key indicators of spare labour market capacity, from both an employee and employer perspective, into a single, and easy to interpret, summary measure.

Regions are grouped into distinct categories of overall labour market performance, ranging from 'poor' to 'strong', which provides an accurate and reliable view of labour market performance, relative to the national average.

A strong labour market, that is characterised by a high rate of employment, where employment opportunities are extended to all who want them, is central to a strong economy and prosperous and inclusive society.

Factors used to assess labour market performance

The **working age (15-64 years) employment rate**[5] is one of the most commonly used indicators for understanding conditions in the labour market and is a key measure of performance. It provides an insight into the extent to which available labour (some individual's personal circumstances may prevent them from participating in the labour market) is being used and is unaffected by voluntary changes in labour force participation.

Along with the employment rate, the **unemployment rate** is one of the most commonly used indicators for understanding conditions in the labour market and is a key measure of spare capacity. It provides insights into the availability of unused labour that is willing and available for work.

The **JobSeeker income support rate** is a reliable measure of spare capacity in the labour market and is an important complement to other measures of spare capacity. It is a combination of the JobSeeker payment and Youth Allowance (other) payment, measured as a proportion of the working age population. These payments are designed to provide financial assistance to support those looking for working, including those who may be working part-time.

The **underemployment rate**[6] takes a broad view of underutilisation by measuring the share of the labour force that is employed, but not fully utilised in terms of the amount of work people would like. It is an important complement to the unemployment rate in assessing how much spare capacity could be called upon in adapting to labour market strength and weakness.

The **vacancy fill rate**[2] is a key measure of unmet demand for labour. A low fill rate indicates that the demand for labour is not matched by the supply of labour from workers. This may be due to a lack of suitable applicants or high search costs that reduce labour market matching efficiency. Poorer-performing regions experience more difficulty filling vacant positions, despite having a higher availability of unused labour willing and available to work.

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[5] In June 2025, the ABS modelled estimates of employment rates (working age) were incorporated into the RLMI model replacing the ABS direct survey unemployment rate estimates that were previously used. The modelled estimates are more stable and reliable than the direct survey estimates.

[6] Measured at the Greater Capital City Statistical Area (GCCSA) level due to data quality issues with this factor at the SA4 level.

Methodology

Please refer to the RLMI Methodology Paper for more information on the RLMI, including its purpose and factor selection.

Referencing this report

Data in this release should be referenced as: Jobs and Skills Australia, RLMI, June 2025

Contact us

For additional information, email RegionalWorkforceAssessment@jobsandskills.gov.au